



Trusted Trader

Terms and conditions

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The Scheme

Renfrewshire Trusted Trader Scheme is a local business partnership promoting good practice through customer-led assessment. Businesses that wish to register with the scheme will be required to apply for membership. All applicants must demonstrate a substantial amount of work is carried out within areas currently covered by the Scheme.

Applicants are subject to an initial auditing process by Trading Standards. This includes analysis of feedback from previous customers and a review of associated paperwork. Once the information has been assessed the business will be accepted or refused registration. Should a business be accepted, they will be required to pay an annual fee which will contribute to the maintenance and operational costs of the scheme.

Successful applicants will issue consumers with a feedback form on completion of work. Consumers will complete this form rating the business' trading practices and transparency; they will also be invited to submit comments in relation to the work carried out. Completed surveys will be published online and Trading Standards will continually monitor customer feedback.

Aims and Objectives

The Renfrewshire Trusted Trader Scheme aims to:

- Increase consumer choice and confidence;
- Empower and educate consumers in relation to consumer protection legislation;
- Drive continuous improvement for both Trading Standards and local businesses;
- Create a fair trading environment, encouraging economic growth;
- Promote the business advice service offered Trading Standards;
- Identify and target sectors where most support is required; and
- Support the objectives of the Community and Council Plans.

Benefits

Consumers and businesses will be encouraged to use the scheme through continuous promotion. There are a number of benefits available:

- Consumers have access to up-to-date information on potential contractors. They are further reassured by member's mandatory compliance with the scheme's Code of Practice.
- Member businesses are likely to benefit from increased business as consumers deem them to be more conscientious and trust-worthy.
- Members will receive enhanced support from Trading Standards.

Trading Standards Commitments

Trading Standards team will:

1. Provide a fair and impartial service for traders and consumers.
2. Ensure compliance with consumer protection legislation and agree to carry out any investigations promptly and fairly.
3. Provide advice on both civil and criminal consumer protection legislation upon request.
4. Assist with staff training wherever possible, and where resources permit.
5. Nominate an officer to act as a liaison for your business and a contact for advice and assistance.
6. Provide appropriate advice to the consumer following a complaint to the service. Where the complaint cannot be resolved, we will attempt to mediate between both parties or recommend arbitration, through a trade association if appropriate, or action through alternative dispute resolution or court system.
7. Provide an appropriate level of promotion of the scheme and its members.
8. Provide a feedback system that is accessible for consumers and traders.
9. Conduct regular reviews of the scheme.
10. Reserve the right to revoke membership of the scheme where traders pursue a course of business detrimental to consumer's interests, or in conflict with the Code of Practice (see below).

11. Where membership is terminated prematurely (except where membership is revoked), for whatever reason, businesses will be refunded any overpayment of the balance which will be broken down into monthly units.
12. Reserve the right to publicise the removal of traders from the scheme where appropriate.

Code of Practice

Member commitments

Members of the scheme will:

1. Provide Trading Standards with full details of ownership, address, trading names, premises, staffing levels and trade activities.
2. Inform Trading Standards of any significant changes to the above within 28 days of the change.
3. Ensure that all employees and subcontractors are made aware of the Scheme and their obligations.
4. Agree to offer feedback questionnaires to customers for review online. It is expected that a minimum of 4 reviews per year, per trader are published to keep the directory up to date.
5. Agree to abide by the letter and the spirit of this Code of Practice.
6. Pay the annual membership fee as agreed, otherwise membership will be revoked.
7. Adequately train staff to perform their duties and maintain appropriate training records. These should be made available to the council on request.
8. Deal with complaints promptly, effectively and in accordance with the Dispute Resolution Process (see page 8).
9. Adhere to terms of any trade association Code of Practice that members are also affiliated with.
10. Provide consumers, where appropriate, with a written schedule of works and a written quotation before any work commences. Any change made to this schedule shall be communicated to the consumer before any further work is carried out. Any call out charges must be notified in advance to the consumer.
11. Provide consumers with an invoice or receipt showing details of work carried out, itemising any parts that have been supplied, materials used, labour and other costs.
12. Make available any parts that have been replaced for consumers on request.
13. Ensure consumers have consented to any second hand or reconditioned goods being provided.
14. Include VAT in all prices including advertised prices and comply with relevant consumer protection legislation.
15. Respect the wishes of residents who express or imply they do not want to receive cold calls in person or on the telephone.
16. Comply with most recent legislation relating to cancellation notices and consumer's cancellation rights.
17. Failure to comply with any of the above terms will result in an investigation by Trading Standards and potential termination of membership.

Guide to Trading Fairly

General guidelines fair and honest trading:

1. All advertisements produced in connection with your firm must comply with relevant legislation
2. If appropriate, clear and accurate information regarding key terms and conditions shall be provided in advance of the contract. Consumer contracts shall comply with guidance produced by the Department of Business, Innovation and Skill.
3. Where a guarantee or warranty is offered to consumers, it will be made clear that these are in addition to consumer's statutory rights and are optional. Details of who has overall responsibility for the warranty must be provided. There must be no high pressure selling of any additional guarantees or warranties.
4. Full written information concerning the contract should be provided to the consumer where appropriate.
5. Member firms shall give clear information concerning statutory or additional cancellation rights that consumers are afforded.

6. All members must be committed to providing a quality service to their customers.
7. Members must not seek to take advantage of vulnerable consumers and, where reasonably practicable, firms should offer additional assistance to ensure contracts are fully understood.
8. Upon receipt of a complaint, you should cooperate fully with any appropriate intermediary acting for the consumer.
9. Completion and delivery dates shall be agreed in advance. Where a delay has proven unavoidable the consumer shall be given as much notice as possible.

Sub-contracting

Where a member subcontracts all or part of any work, then the member must ensure the subcontractor is aware of obligations under these terms and conditions and must guarantee the work of the subcontractor to the same standard as the member firm.

Promotion

The words “Council Approved”, “Trading Standards Approved” or any similar terms must **not** be used with any reference to membership of the scheme or in conjunction with the logo. On joining the scheme, businesses will be issued a membership certificate to display on their business premises and an electronic copy of the scheme logo.

If a member leaves the scheme, or membership is revoked, then the use of the logo must cease immediately and all advertising and business documentation must be modified within 14 days of membership ending.

Continued use of the logo may constitute an offence and formal enforcement action may be considered. Similarly, non-members found displaying the logo may be subject to enforcement action.

Dispute Resolution Process

Where a consumer is dissatisfied with a member’s work or trading practices, members must agree to comply with the following process:

1. Members should make attempts to resolve the matter directly with the consumer.
2. If the member’s internal complaint procedure has been exhausted then either party may contact Trading Standards for advice on how to proceed.
3. Trading Standards will respond promptly.
4. If the complaint cannot be resolved at this stage, the member should write to the consumer directing them to an appropriate alternative dispute resolution provider in accordance with legislation.
5. Continuous breaches of these Terms and Conditions may result in membership being revoked.

Appeal Process

If an applicant is refused access to the Scheme or a current member has had their membership revoked then an appeals procedure is in place.

To start this process the applicant should write to the Consumer Protection Manager at:

Renfrewshire Council
Community Resources
Renfrewshire House
Cotton Street
Paisley
PA1 1BR

1. Appeals will be assessed by the Consumer Protection Manager.
2. Appeals will be conducted in writing and where necessary a personal hearing will be held.
3. We will write to confirm receipt of your appeal within three working days. We will send a detailed reply within a further ten working days, or confirm how long it will take us to investigate further.

4. If you are not happy with how we have dealt with your appeal, you can write to the Head of Service or the Director. If they have already been involved in the procedure, you can write to the Chief Executive.
5. If you are still unhappy with the decision you can appeal to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.
6. Any costs incurred by the applicant attending the appeal process will be borne solely by the applicant.

Membership Fees

Trusted Traded membership fees are payable from 1st April each year.

1. These fees are reviewed annually and can be provided by contacting Renfrewshire Council's Trading Standards team on 0300 300 0380
2. Prices include all feedback forms, website and data processing.
3. Access to the Trusted Trader website is available to the public.
4. In the event a membership is revoked, there will be no refund of membership fees paid, or reimbursement in respect of advertising or documentation.

Community Resources
Renfrewshire Council
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Cotton Street
Paisley
PA1 1BR

Tel: 0300 300 0380
e-mail: ts.es@renfrewshire.gov.uk
website: www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/trustedtraders